

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 000794

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SUBJECT: BRAZIL READY TO RECOGNIZE ITGA, NEEDS BUREAUCRATIC NUDGE

Classified By: Lawrence E. Cohen, Poloff, reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (C) Summary and Introduction: Although the GOB is considering reopening a diplomatic mission in Baghdad, there has been no public mention of Brazilian intentions towards Afghanistan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) Division Chief responsible for South Asia acknowledged a lack of focus on Afghanistan, but affirmed the GOB does desire ties with the Afghan Government. The USG, he suggested, could help overcome the MRE's bureaucratic inertia regarding joint diplomatic recognition with a friendly nudge in New York and Washington. He argued that the time is right to come to closure diplomatically; once ties are established, Brazil could find a way to assist in Phase IV reconstruction efforts. End Summary

¶2. (C) Poloff delivered powerpoint presentation on Coalition nation building efforts in Afghanistan to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) Division Chief for Asia and Oceania Oswaldo Biato Junior. Biato appreciated the presentation, admitted that Afghanistan had not received adequate MRE attention, and agreed that Brazil, as a current UNSC member, ought to be more engaged in Afghan issues. To explain the lack of focus, he noted bureaucratic factors. For example, the MRE traditionally uses its representative in Tehran to cover Afghanistan -- even though Iran is under a different MRE division (Near East). Biato's own tiny division of four officers is responsible for all of South Asia and China. Recent and upcoming visits of President Lula and Foreign Minister Amorin to the region have absorbed all their energy. Meanwhile, Afghanistan remains far away and out of sight.

¶3. (SBU) While Brazil had enjoyed diplomatic relations with Afghanistan since the 1950s, Biato acknowledged he was unaware of any formal contact with a GOA since the Russian invasion in 1979. However, unlike Iraq, Afghanistan poses no policy difficulties for the GOB. The GOB is supportive of the Bonn Process, understands the importance of Afghanistan in the war on terrorism, and has no problem with recognizing the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan (ITGA).

¶4. (C) Biato noted that the Afghan Ambassador in Washington recently had approached his Brazilian counterpart three times to request permission to present his credentials in Brasilia. Bureaucratic inertia is at fault, Biato said, for the lack of movement to respond affirmatively. The GOB would have no objection to receiving him, Biato said. The division chief suggested that specific messages of support from Brazilian ambassadors in Washington and New York to the MRE could provide the needed bureaucratic nudge and he suggested that USUN approach the Brazilian delegation to urge it to communicate with MRE in favor of Brazilian recognition of the ITGA.

¶5. (C) The timing for formalizing Afghan-Brazilian relations, Biato sensed, is right. The MRE has decided to remove Afghanistan from the plate of their Tehran ambassador and give the portfolio to Islamabad. A new ambassador to Pakistan, Fausto Godoy, has just been confirmed and will be consulting with MRE shortly before departing for Islamabad. Biato said that Godoy is eager to travel to Kabul. Moreover, diplomatic ties with Afghanistan could help bolster Brazil's claim for a permanent UN Security Council seat -- an argument Biato wanted to highlight to senior MRE leadership.

¶6. (C) Once diplomatic relations are in place, Brazil may be eager to help in some way. Biato pointed out that the GOB has not received any specific request from the UN or the Coalition for assistance, but there are areas in which Brazil can contribute. For example, Brazil had expertise in "elections infrastructure and technology" that might be applicable to Afghanistan's developmental circumstances. Poloff pointed out that it would be more useful for Brazil to identify how it could help, perhaps following an investigative mission to Afghanistan, than to expect the Coalition or the ITGA to come to it with specific requests. Biato also described the GOB's G-3 (Brazil, South Africa, India) efforts to find common ground for development assistance programs. India, in particular, he opined, might welcome a joint effort with Brazil to assist Afghanistan. While Brazil has few financial resources to dedicate to Afghanistan, in-kind support, perhaps in conjunction with

Indian personnel, could be made available, Biato said.

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